

REMARKS

Claims 1-8 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 1-7 are amended and claim 8 is added. Further, the Abstract is replaced by the attached substitute Abstract. Support for the amendments to claims 1 and 7 can be found, for example, in Figs. 4 and 11, and on page 23, lines 4-6. Support for new claim 8 can be found, for example, on page 23, lines 11-16. Claims 2-6 are amended for consistency. No new matter is added.

I. Objection to the Specification

The Office Action objects to the specification because of the Abstract. The attached substitute Abstract better reflects the claimed method, responsive to the objection. Thus, it is respectfully requested that the objection be withdrawn.

II. Rejections of the Claims

The Office Action rejects claims 1-7 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) and under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Umeda et al. (Umeda), U.S. Patent No. 6,388,358. The rejections are respectfully traversed.

Umeda fails to disclose or suggest forming a first copying surface in a slot opening forming cut at an end of each slot on the end surface of the stator core so as to be curved along a bending direction of the corresponding electric conductors; and forming a second (or third) copying surface on each of a plurality of bending members, as recited in claims 1 and 7, along with the other claimed features.

Umeda discloses a stator 2 including a stator winding formed of a plurality of conductor members (Figs. 1-3). As shown in Fig. 4A, Umeda discloses a straight portion 331b extending from the outermost layer of a slot 35 that is bent in a radially outside direction to separate the straight portion 331b from another straight portion 332b (col. 6, lines 17-22). The straight portion 331b is then bent at a radially-outside outlet portion 35a of the slot 35 (col. 6, lines 22-24). Fig. 7 merely shows connection portions of segments 33 on a stator core

32. However, Umeda fails to disclose or suggest forming a first copying surface at an end of each slot 35 on an end surface of the stator core 32. Accordingly, when the straight portion 331b is bent at a radially-outside outlet portion 35a of the slot 35, there is a high probability that an insulating coat of the portion 331b is damaged by the outlet portion 35a (see page 2, lines 6-11 of the specification, discussing damage to the insulating coats). Further, Umeda fails to teach or suggest a bending member having a second copying surface. Accordingly, in Umeda, the straight portion 331b is not bent in a successively-curved shape, as recited in claims 1 and 7. Thus, there is a high probability that an excessive stress is applied to a bent portion of the portion 331b, and that the insulating coat of the portion 331b is damaged.

On the other hand, in the methods recited in claims 1 and 7, because the electric conductors are first bent along the first copying surface at the end of each slot on the end surface of the stator core, the height of the end coils protruded from the end surface of the stator core can be lowered. Further, because both the first copying surface and the second (or third) copying surface are formed in a successively-curved shape, the electric conductor can be bent in the successively-curved shape. Accordingly, no excessive stress is applied to the bent portion of the electric conductor, and damage to the insulating coat of the electric conductor can be prevented (see page 25, lines 5-17 of the specification).

The Office Action asserts that, even if Umeda does not disclose the first, second and third copying surfaces recited in claims 1 and 7, it would have been an obvious design choice to incorporate the copying surfaces into the teaching of Umeda because "Applicant has not disclosed that these features are critical, patentably distinguishing features," and that the invention would perform equally well with the configuration disclosed in Fig. 7 of Umeda. Applicant respectfully disagrees with this assertion because (1) the benefits of these features is disclosed, for example, at page 25, lines 5-17 of the specification, as discussed above; and (2) because the configuration disclosed in Fig. 7 suffers from the shortcomings discussed

above whereas the first and second (or third) copying surfaces recited in amended claims 1 and 7 have benefits described, for example, page 25, lines 5-17 of the specification. Thus, claims 1 and 7 are patentable over Umeda.

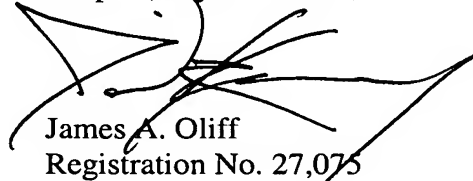
Because claims 2-6 incorporate the features of claim 1, these claims also are patentable over Umeda. Further, new claim 8 is patentable over Umeda.

III. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claim 1-8 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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Attachment:
Substitute Abstract

Date: October 18, 2006

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